



Media Release  
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## **Arthur's Pass vehicle put into snow service**

The Arthur's Pass Volunteer Rural Fire Force have put their new emergency response vehicle to good use - rescuing stranded travellers from a snow storm earlier this month.

Hamish Reid, Nic Menary and local police officer Scott Carmody spent six hours rescuing people stranded in Otira Gorge on the West Coast side of Arthur's Pass, after responding to a call on the evening of 7 August.

Around 20 vehicles were stranded, including three buses. While most of the vehicles had already been evacuated, the fire team, along with a West Coast police unit and roading contractors from Sicon Ferguson, worked from 8pm to 1am to evacuate another 20 people. Many of those rescued were Chinese tourists.

Arthur's Pass Volunteer Rural Fire Force Controller Nic Menary says the new Landcruiser handled the conditions exceptionally well, and the team would have never attempted the rescue with their regular fire appliance.

"Although the regular fire appliance is a four-wheel drive, it was inadequate for the conditions that night. The Landcruiser muscled through the snow drifts with ease. This day was particularly bad as a layer of ice from the night before was on the road and this received a healthy dump of snow on top. The fact it is a double cab allowed us to move people more quickly."

"We appreciate the Council going above and beyond the call of duty in providing a vehicle that can respond safely to things other than just rural fires."

The keys to the emergency response vehicle were handed over to the rural fire force in July this year, replacing an older vehicle from the 1970s. Selwyn District Council provided \$60,000 for the vehicle to be purchased, fitted out and brought up to emergency response standards.

The Toyota Landcruiser double cab is now suitable for use in the alpine area of Arthur's Pass and the extreme weather conditions the area experiences. The vehicle has multiple uses and can also be used for tackling small vegetation fires, spot fires and car fires, as well as providing radio communications, and traffic control at crash scenes.

The vehicle carries medical equipment including a defibrillator, a stretcher and first aid gear. Its fire-fighting capability includes a water tank that holds 200 litres with a foam induction system.

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